

# OPTIMISATION OF WIRE-EDM PROCESS PARAMETERS FOR ACHIEVING LOW SURFACE ROUGHNESS IN MACHINING OF IS 5986 FE 410 STEEL AND REGRESSION MODELLING

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## ABSTRACT

Non-traditional machining methods are popular in the recent era for machining of various profiles in different engineering materials. In this work, the effect of critical process parameters namely current ( $I_c$ ), pulse-on time ( $T_{on}$ ), pulse-off time ( $T_{off}$ ), wire-speed ( $W_s$ ) and voltage ( $I_v$ ) on surface roughness (SR) is investigated while machining non-traditional machining methods are popular in the recent era for machining of various profiles in different engineering materials. In this work, the effect of critical process parameters namely current ( $I_c$ ), pulse-on time ( $T_{on}$ ), pulse-off time ( $T_{off}$ ), wire-speed ( $W_s$ ) and voltage ( $I_v$ ) on surface roughness (SR) is investigated while machining of IS 5986 FE 410 steel by wire-electrical discharge machine (wire- EDM). The experiments were designed using Taguchi L16 arrays and results are analyzed using statistical methods. The process parameters such as  $I_c$ ,  $T_{off}$  and  $W_s$  showed a significant contribution by 66.22 %, 13.77 % and 9.25 % respectively on SR. Further, the process parameters were optimized to obtain a minimum SR which produced in Ra values 1.480  $\mu\text{m}$  at settings  $I_c$  -4 A,  $T_{on}$  -40  $\mu\text{s}$ ,  $T_{off}$  - 10  $\mu\text{s}$ ,  $W_s$  - 1400 rpm and  $I_v$  - 80 V. Regression model is developed to predict the SR at different settings for the control parameters which predicted the response with average predication an error of 11.08 %

**KEYWORDS:** Wire-EDM, Material Removal Rate, Pulse-Off Time, Current IS 5986 FE 410 Steel, Wire Speed, Pulse-on Time & Voltage

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid changes in the market scenario demand the steels with enhanced quality, properties and performance capabilities to suit the design specification of the end products. Alloys of steel possess superior mechanical properties such as corrosion resistance [1–2], good hot workability and high toughness which made the material suitable for structural applications. In general, steel alloys are used in various applications including automobiles, ship building, boiler and pressure vessels, transmission towers, railways, oil and petrochemicals, coal and mining, general and heavy engineering machinery parts, etc. Machining of steel is challenging due to high affinity of work hardening, high toughness, low thermal conductivity and high fracture toughness [3–6]. Materials such as duplex stainless steel show the tendency for the formation of built-up edge. The adherence of material to cutting tool reduces the cutting speeds which affect the machining efficiency in the form of accelerated tool wear, poor surface finish and low dimensional accuracy [7, 8]. Although some of the complexities involved in conventional machining may be addressed by the non-traditional machining methods, there is limited literature available on machining characterization of steel and its alloys.

Satyanarayanan Raghavan et al [9] attempted laser tempering based turning process for machining of hardened AISI 52100 steel which is used for large wind turbine bearing. Initially, the hardened work piece surface was laser tempered and then conventional machining was made. The study showed that this method resulted in lower cutting forces and tool wear rate, higher Material Removal Rate (MRR) compared to conventional hard turning. Ali Alshemary [10] studied the different types of errors generated on cylindrical holes while machining of 2205 duplex stainless steel fabricated by the wire-electric discharge machining (EDM). Interactions between process parameters were found to be significantly affecting the diameter errors such as circularity and cylindricity. These errors are produced by non-uniform undercut and overcut which are controlled by settings to input parameters. Janaka R Gamage et al [12] studied the process level environmental effect of EDM process settings on machining performance of aluminium (3003) and steel (AISI P20) through time, energy, resources and emissions studies for each case. A considerable amount of energy consumption was found to occur during non-productive machining stages which particularly show the impact on the environment in the form of consumption of electrical energy (60%). Deepak D et al [13] optimized the current and pulse duration in electric discharge drilling of D2 steel using graphite electrode. The study showed that MRR and surface roughness were significantly influenced by the current. The optimum settings produced MRR 38.16 mg/min and surface roughness of 3.39  $\mu\text{m}$ . Morphological of the cut surface showed the formation of globules due to machining. Further, the coefficient was established for predicting surface roughness for machining this material by EDM [13]. The authors also investigated the influence of abrasive water jet machining of D2 heat-treated steel [14]. It was found that at constant stand-off distance (SOD), the top kerf width was increased by 18% and the bottom kerf width was decreased by 25% due to increase in jet pressure in one pass machining. Further, surface roughness was also found increased at higher SOD and feed rate. Yingmou Zhu et al [17] studied the surface quality of stainless steel produced by blasting erosion arc machining. The results showed that the negative beam resulted in producing a highly rough surface (up to  $R_a - 55 \mu\text{m}$ ), the heat-affected zone (HAZ) to depth about 13  $\mu\text{m}$  from the machined surface and the formation of recast layer. The positive beam resulted in good surface finish ( $R_a 9.5 \mu\text{m}$ ), the HAZ was lesser 5  $\mu\text{m}$  and minimization of the recast layer. Klocke et al [18] investigated the Electrochemical Machining of 42CrMo4 Steel by numerical methods. The study detailed the micro-structure evolution process on surface topography in a passivating electrolyte system. The model helps to predict the surface topography for different process parameters and various initial microstructures.

This work investigates the effect of current, pulse-on time, pulse-off time, wire-speed and voltage on MRR while machining of IS 5986 FE 410 steel by wire-EDM process and optimise the settings. Also, based on the experimental results, a mathematical model is developed to predict the MRR for different input settings of the process parameters. This work is expected to help wire-EDM industries to choose the optimum setting for machining of IS 5986 FE 410 grade steel by wire-EDM.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Experimental Set up and Specimen Details

Figure 1 shows the details of experimental set up. In the present work, experiments are performed using 2-axis (X-320 mm, Y-400 mm) computer numerically controlled wire-EDM made by Concord wire-EDM, India (Model: DK7732). Molybdenum wire (diameter: 0.16 mm) is used as tool electrode during the experiments. Mixture of soft water and gel is used as dielectric fluid. The resolution of the controller is 0.001 mm. The work piece used is IS 5986 Fe 410 steel. The

chemical composition and mechanical properties of the work piece is shown in table 1 and table 2 respectively. The carbon equivalent (CE) is determined based on ladle analysis as given by eq. (1).

$$CE = C + \frac{Mn}{6} + \frac{Cr + Mo + V}{5} + \frac{Ni + Cu}{15} \quad (1)$$



Figure 1: Experimental Setup.

Table 1: Chemical Composition

Carbon	Manganese	Phosphorus	Sulphur	CE
0.20	1.50	0.035	0.035	0.45

Table 2: Mechanical Properties

Yield Strength	Ultimate Tensile Strength	Elongation
420 MPa	480–590 MPa	15%

## 2.2 Design of Experiments

The process parameters such as current, pulse-on time, pulse-off time, wire speed and voltage are chosen to study its effect on SR. The voltage is varied at two different levels and remaining parameters are varied at four different levels. Table 3 show the process parameters and their levels. These levels are chosen based on the trial experiments. Total degree of freedom required for the experimental design is 13, hence experiments are designed using  $L_{16} (4^5 \times 1^2)$  Taguchi orthogonal array. Table 4 shows the experimental design. The experiments were replicated for two trials in each experimental condition. Thickness of specimens (5 mm) and the supply pressure of dielectric fluid were kept constant during experiments.

Table 3: Wire-EDM Process Parameters and their Levels

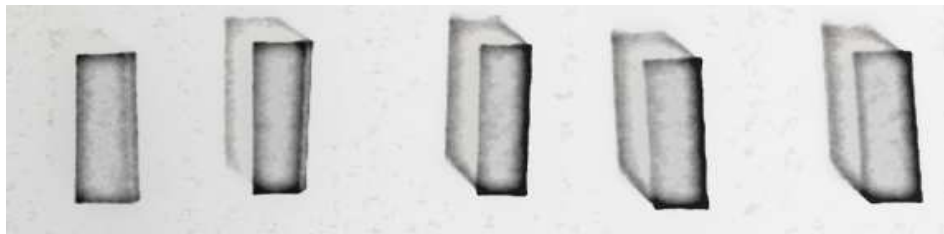
Parameters	Unit	Code	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Current	A	$I_c$	3	4	5	6
Pulse-on time	$\mu s$	$T_{on}$	20	30	40	50
Pulse-off time	$\mu s$	$T_{off}$	5	10	15	20
Wire speed	RPM	$W_s$	175	350	700	1400
Voltage	V	$I_v$	80	90	-	-

**Table 4: The Experimental Design and Corresponding Surface Roughness**

	Settings of the Process Parameters					
	I <sub>c</sub>	T <sub>on</sub>	T <sub>off</sub>	W <sub>s</sub>	I <sub>v</sub>	Average R <sub>a</sub>
1	3	10	5	1400	80	6.82
2	3	20	10	700	80	6.98
3	3	30	15	350	90	8.80
4	3	40	20	175	90	9.20
5	4	10	10	350	90	7.82
6	4	20	5	175	90	10.12
7	4	30	20	1400	80	7.64
8	4	40	15	700	80	8.78
9	5	10	15	175	80	6.64
10	5	20	20	350	80	5.36
11	5	30	5	700	90	3.04
12	5	40	10	1400	90	2.60
13	6	10	20	700	90	6.82
14	6	20	15	1400	90	4.72
15	6	30	10	175	80	3.74
16	6	40	5	350	80	3.52

### 2.3 Measurement of Response

Test samples are machined for a length of 20 mm as per the experimental design shown in table 4. The work-piece is split and the roughness on the cut surface is measured across the cut surface using Taylor surtronic instrument. The sampling length of 10 mm is maintained during the measurements, the average Ra obtained in each experimental trial is tabulated in table 4. The cut surfaces of test samples machined at different settings of process parameters is shown in figure 2.

**Figure 2: Cut Surface of the Machined Samples.**

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 3.1 The Effect of Process Parameters on Surface Roughness

The effect of current on surface roughness is shown in figure 3 (a). At current settings of 3 A to 4 A, the machining resulted in high SR in the average range of 7.95  $\mu\text{m}$  to 8.59  $\mu\text{m}$ . Further increase in current to 5 A resulted in reducing the SR up to 4.41  $\mu\text{m}$ . The intensity of the spark energy (E) increased according to the equation,  $E = I_v I_c T_{on}$ . Higher current resulted in removing the materials with greater radius (r) i.e.,  $r \propto E^{0.33}$ . It is also observed in figure 3(f) that the spark frequency is decreasing with increasing levels of current. The combined effect of increasing the current and decreasing the spark frequency ( $1/T_{on}+T_{off}$ ) resulted in melting the material over a greater radius and effective removal of removed material from the machining surface. This resulted in reducing surface roughness upto 48.66 % by increasing the current settings to 5 A during machining of IS 5986 FE 410 steel. Beyond current settings of 5 A, result showed a slight increase in SR (6.57 %) due to the very high spark intensity. This indicates the existence of the optimum setting to the current.

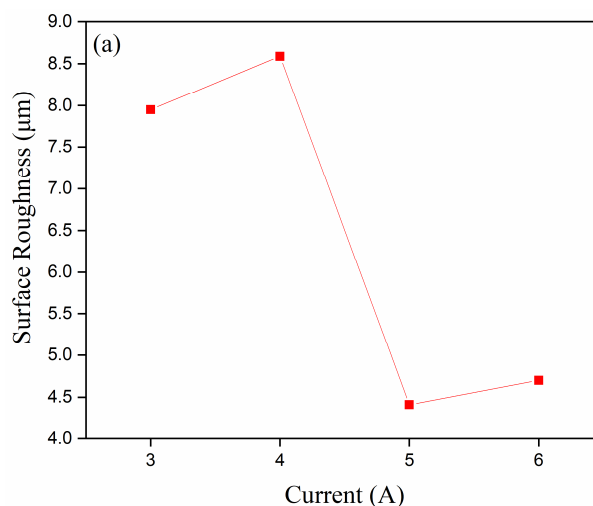


Figure 3 (a): The Effect of  $I_c$  on Surface Roughness.

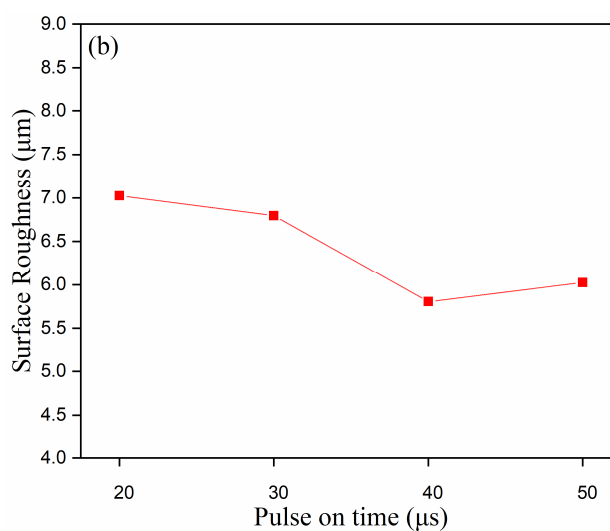


Figure 3 (b): The Effect of  $T_{on}$  on Surface Roughness.

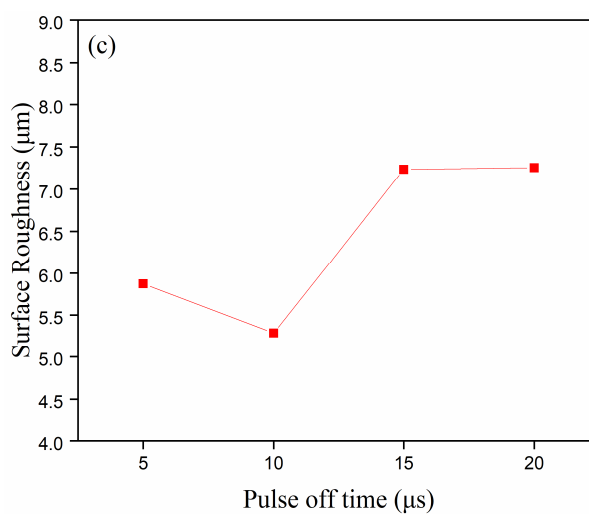
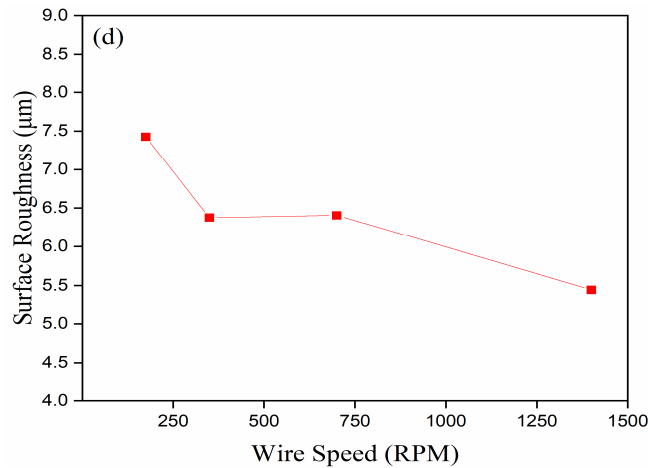
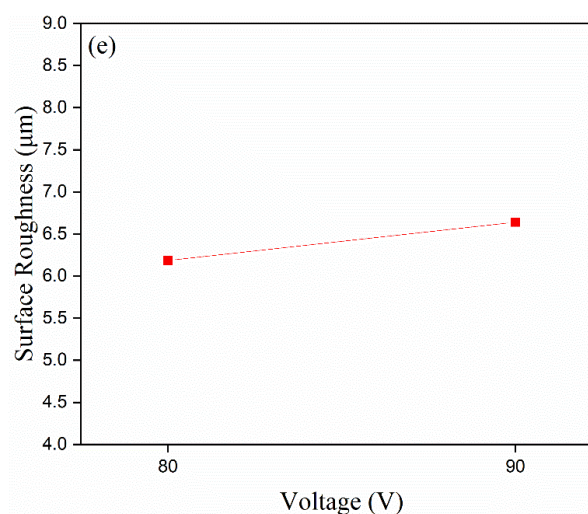


Figure 3 (c): The Effect of  $T_{off}$  on Surface Roughness.



**Figure 3 (d): The Effect of  $W_s$  on Surface Roughness.**

Figure 3(b) shows that increasing the  $T_{on}$  from 20  $\mu s$  to 40  $\mu s$  reduced the SR from 7.025  $\mu m$  to 5.805  $\mu m$ . This is due to the increase in the intensity of the spark energy which increased duration of  $T_{on}$  as explained earlier in section 3.1. But, a further increase in  $T_{on}$  showed a slight increase in surface roughness by about 3.79 % due to reduced spark frequency as seen in figure 3(e). An increase in the  $T_{off}$  from 5  $\mu s$  to 10  $\mu s$  is found to reduce SR from 5.875  $\mu m$  to 5.285  $\mu m$  as shown in figure 3 (c). But, further increase in pulse-off time beyond 10  $\mu s$  upto 15  $\mu s$  resulted in a steady increase in SR and then it almost remained constant for 20  $\mu s$ . This indicates that very short duration of  $T_{off}$  leads to promote high SR due to insufficient time available for flushing of the debris of machining before the beginning of next spark. Beyond the optimum duration of  $T_{off}$ -10  $\mu s$ , the machining results in the formation of the recast layer due to reduced spark frequencies and non-machining time ( $T_{off}$ ). Further, it is observed in figure 3(d) that, the SR decreased with an increase in the rotational speed of drum on which the electrode wire rotates. High SR values are seen at the drum rotation speed in the range from 175 RPM to 750 RPM. But, at 1400 RPM a very low SR value (5.44  $\mu m$ ) is achieved. This is due to the fact that the debris of machining is effectively removed by increasing the electrode wire-speed. The effective removal of debris prevented its recasting on the machined surface and hence reduced the surface roughness. Figure 3 (e) shows the effect of voltage on SR. It is observed that SR is increased by 7.35 % for change in voltage from 80 V to 90 V. This is because of the higher amount of energy discharged in each spark during the machining process.



**Figure 3 (e): The Effect of  $I_v$  on Surface Roughness.**

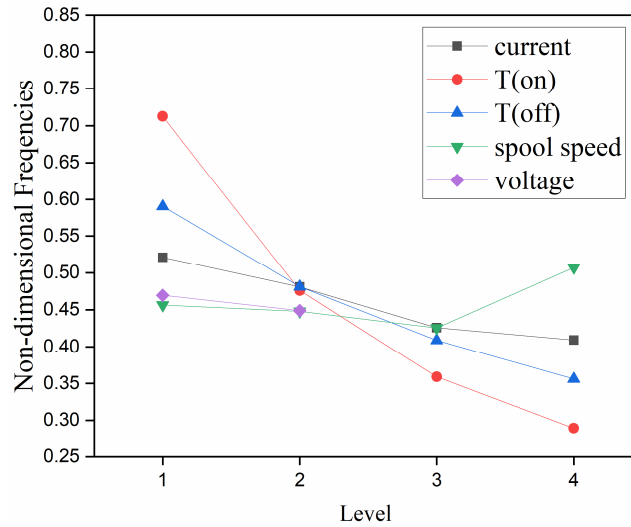


Figure 3 (f): The Spark Frequency at Different Levels of Process Parameters.

### 3.4 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of MRR

The SR obtained at different settings of the process parameters is analysed using statistical method. To identify process parameters which are significantly affecting SR, F-test is conducted on the ANOVA data at 95 % confidence. Table 5 shows the ANOVA of SR obtained in the present work. The F-values of the  $I_c$ ,  $T_{off}$  and  $W_s$  are found to be higher than or close to the critical values of 3.63 for error degree of freedom 2. Hence their main effect on SR is significant in the chosen range of settings. Further, the percentage contribution of each process parameter is calculated. The  $I_c$  is the most significant parameter that contributed a maximum of 66.22 % variation to SR followed by  $T_{off}$  (13.88 %) and  $W_s$  (9.25 %). The effect of Voltage and Ton is 2.92 % and 4.90 % respectively are considered insignificant on SR in the chosen range of operating parameters.

Table 5: A NOVA for SR

Source	Degree of Freedom	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F
Current	3	56.1923	18.7308	23.64
Pulse-on time	3	4.1627	1.3876	1.75
Pulse-off time	3	11.7859	3.9286	4.96
Wire speed	3	7.8507	2.6169	3.30
Voltage	1	0.8281	0.8281	1.04
Residual Error	2	1.5850	0.7925	
Total	15	82.4047		

### 3.5 Optimum of Process Parameters

The levels of the process parameters are optimised to produce the low surface roughness while machining of IS 5986-Fe410 by wire-EDM. The average SR produced on the machined surface at different settings of process parameters is shown in table 6. From the table, it is observed that the minimum SR is achieved at the settings, current: level 3 (5A), pulse-on time: level 3 (40  $\mu$ s), pulse-off time: 10  $\mu$ s (level 2), drum/wire-speed: level 4 (1400 rpm) and voltage: level 1 (80 V). The predicted SR at this setting is 1.480 $\mu$ m. The confirmation experiments are conducted and test results are shown in the table 7. It is observed that SR obtained by the confirmation experiments are in close agreement with the predicted SR with an average deviation of 11.08 %. The maximum change (delta) in SR due to change in settings of



different process parameters at different levels is also shown in the same table. Based on the delta values, the process parameters are ranked in the order of their influence as  $I_c$ - I,  $T_{off}$ -II,  $W_s$ -III,  $T_{on}$  - IV, and  $I_v$  - V.

**Table 6: The Average SR**

Level	Current	Pulse-on Time	Pulse Off Time	Wire Speed	Voltage
1	7.950	7.025	5.875	7.425	6.185
2	8.590	6.795	5.285	6.375	6.640
3	4.410	5.805	7.235	6.405	
4	4.700	6.025	7.255	5.445	
Delta	4.18	1.22	1.97	1.98	0.455

**Table 7: The Predicted and Experimental SR at Optimum Conditions**

Trial	Predicted	Experimental	% Error
1	1.480 $\mu\text{m}$	1.667 $\mu\text{m}$	12.62 %
2	1.480 $\mu\text{m}$	1.618 $\mu\text{m}$	9.3 %
3	1.480 $\mu\text{m}$	1.689 $\mu\text{m}$	14.13 %
4	1.480 $\mu\text{m}$	1.640 $\mu\text{m}$	10.84 %
5	1.480 $\mu\text{m}$	1.627 $\mu\text{m}$	9.95 %

### 3.6. Mathematical Modelling of Surface Roughness

The generalised form of mathematical model to predict the dependent parameter is given by equation (2). A model is developed to establish the relationship between the wire-EDM control process parameters ( $x_1$ : Current,  $x_2$ : Pulse on time,  $x_3$ : Pulse off time,  $x_4$ : wire speed,  $x_5$ : voltage) and the response parameter i.e., SR. Ordinary least square method is used to estimate the model coefficients for the models established. Considering the main effect of process parameters, squared terms and their interaction effect, four different models are developed as given by the equation (3)-(6). The corresponding coefficients of determination ( $R^2$ ) values of model 1, model 2, model 3 and model 4 are 79.88%, 87.57%, 90.10%, 89.59% respectively. The predicting accuracy of these models is tested by experimental data within the range of operating parameters (i.e.,  $3 \geq x_1 \geq 6$ ;  $20 \geq x_2 \geq 50$ ;  $5 \geq x_3 \geq 20$ ;  $375 \geq x_4 \leq 1400$ ;  $80 \geq x_5 \leq 90$ ).

$$y = c + k_1 \times x_1 + k_2 \times x_2 + \dots + k_n \times x_n$$

Where,  $y$  – dependent parameter

$c$  – model constant

$x_1, \dots, x_n$  – control parameter

$k_1, \dots, k_n$  – coefficients of control parameters

(2)

$$SR = 0.21 - 1.287 \times I_c - 0.0293 \times T_{on} + 0.1853 \times T_{off} - 0.000779 \times W_s - 0.0074 \times I_v \quad (3)$$

$$SR = 15.23 - 3.37 \times I_c - 0.277 \times T_{on} + 0.457 \times T_{off} + 0.00283 \times W_s - 0.0331 \times I_v \\ + 0.305 \times I_c^2 + 0.00505 \times T_{on}^2 - 0.0096 \times T_{off}^2 - 0.000002 \times W_s^2 \quad (4)$$

$$SR = -111.1 + 36.06 \times I_c - 0.4365 \times T_{on} + 0.7379 \times T_{off} + 0.02468 \times W_s + 1.302 \times I_v \\ + 0.55 \times I_c^2 + 0.007573 \times T_{on}^2 - 0.01882 \times T_{off}^2 - 0.000013 \times W_s^2 - 0.09164 \times I_c \times T_{on} \\ - 0.1632 \times I_c \times T_{off} + 0.000111 \times I_c \times W_s - 0.4242 \times I_c \times I_v + 0.01640 \times T_{on} \times T_{off} \quad (5)$$



$$SR = 11.38 - 0.96 \times I_c + 0.123 \times T_{off} + 0.00378 \times W_s - 0.0560 \times I_c \times T_{off} - 0.00293 \times I_c \times W_s - 0.000494 \times T_{off} \times W_s + 0.000251 \times I_c \times T_{off} \times W_s \quad (6)$$

Table 8 shows the SR values, predicted values ( $P_a$ ) from the models and its corresponding prediction errors ( $P_{err}$  %) for different test conditions. The maximum, minimum and average prediction error (%) of SR for different models is shown in figure 4. It is observed that model 4 given by equation (6) provides the realistic prediction of SR compared to the other models developed for prediction with average error of 8.59 %. Further, the distribution of residuals over the line of fit is shown in figure 5 (a). It is observed that residuals are distributed around the line of fit linearly and the developed model satisfies the mandatory condition of linearity of the residual distribution. Figure 5 (b) shows the standardized effects of different model parameters and their interaction effect. It is seen that the parameters such as current,  $T_{off}$  and interaction effect of  $I_c$ ,  $T_{off}$ ,  $W_s$  are highly significant in the model for predicting the SR.

Table 8: The Predicting Accuracy of Different Mathematical Models

Test conditions					Expt $R_a$	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
$I_c$	$T_o$	$T_{of}$	$W_s$	$I_v$		$P_a$	$P_{err}$ %	$P_a$	$P_{err}$ %	$P_a$	$P_{err}$ %	$P_a$	$P_{err}$ %
2	10	5	1400	80	6.82	6.58	3.53	6.884	0.93	5.85	14.11	6.65	2.36
2	20	10	700	80	6.98	7.76	10.11	8.153	16.80	6.71	3.78	8.17	17.04
2	30	15	350	90	8.8	8.59	2.35	8.407	4.47	8.70	1.05	8.93	1.58
2	40	20	175	90	9.2	9.36	1.79	9.465	2.88	9.15	0.52	9.34	1.56
3	10	10	350	90	7.82	6.97	12.18	6.977	10.78	7.72	1.25	7.20	7.89
3	30	20	1400	80	7.64	7.49	1.95	6.794	11.07	6.67	12.67	7.83	2.59
3	40	15	700	80	8.78	6.81	28.75	7.913	9.87	8.51	3.06	7.03	19.84
4	10	15	175	80	6.64	6.82	2.64	6.846	3.10	6.58	0.85	5.97	10.02
4	20	20	350	80	5.36	7.31	26.74	6.508	21.40	5.25	1.8	6.31	17.74
4	30	5	700	90	3.04	3.89	22.01	2.932	3.55	2.76	9.08	3.26	7.30
4	40	10	1400	90	2.6	3.98	34.77	4.303	65.50	1.62	37.5	2.55	1.76
5	10	20	700	90	6.82	5.97	14.11	7.062	3.54	6.53	4.18	6.48	4.91
5	20	15	1400	90	4.72	4.21	12.06	4.243	10.10	3.738	20.80	4.98	5.67
5	30	10	175	80	3.74	4.02	6.981	3.636	2.78	3.680	1.61	4.44	18.70
5	40	5	350	80	3.52	2.66	32.09	3.148	10.58	3.418	2.91	3.32	5.61

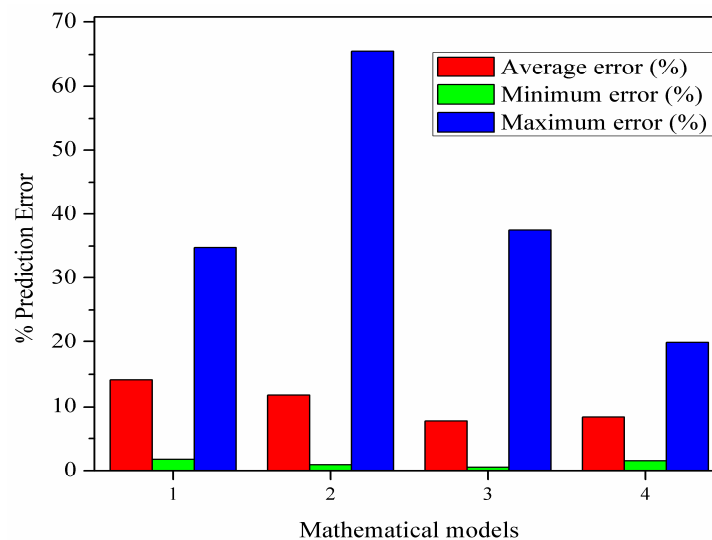


Figure 5: Comparison of Mrr Predicted by Regression Model with Experiments Values.

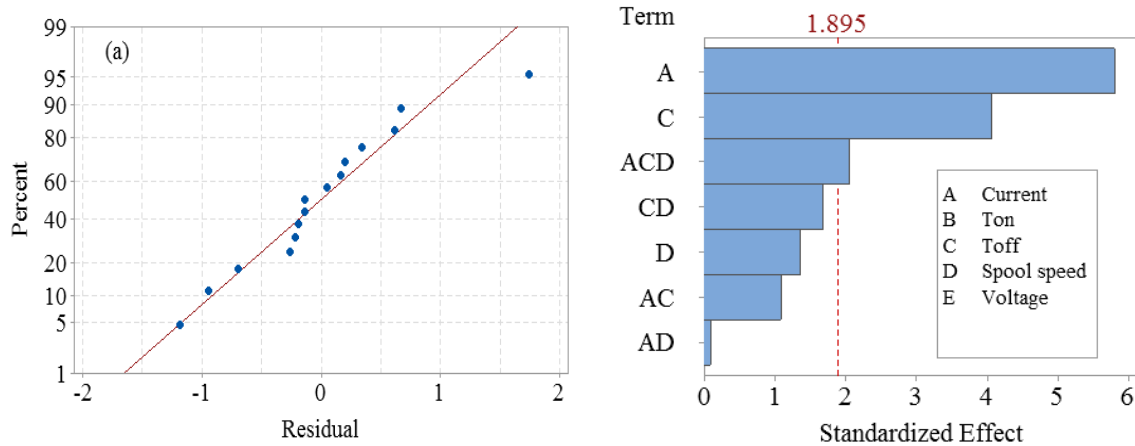


Figure 5 (a): Normal Probability Plot.

(b) Pareto Chart of the Standardized Effects.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the wire-EDM of IS 5986 Fe 410 steel, the following conclusions are drawn.

- The process parameters such as current, pulse-off time and wire-speed showed significant influence on SR. The contribution of process parameters on SR are the current - 66.22 %, pulse-off time - 13.77 %, wire speed - 9.25 %, pulse-on time - 4.90 %, voltage - 2.92 %.
- The optimum settings which produced the minimum SR (1.480  $\mu\text{m}$ ) are current: 5 A, pulse-on time: 40  $\mu\text{s}$ , pulse-off time: 10  $\mu\text{s}$ , drum/wire-speed - 1400 rpm and voltage - 80 V.
- The regression models are developed to predict the SR within the operating range ( $3 \text{ A} \geq x_1 \geq 6 \text{ A}$ ;  $20 \mu\text{s} \geq x_2 \geq 50 \mu\text{s}$ ;  $10 \mu\text{s} \geq x_3 \geq 25 \mu\text{s}$ ;  $375 \text{ rpm} \geq x_4 \geq 1400 \text{ rpm}$ ;  $80 \text{ V} \geq x_5 \geq 90 \text{ V}$ ) with  $R^2$  values 89.30 %. The model predicting accuracy is verified by experiments results and average predication error is 11.08 %.

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